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SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: GHANA: HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL DEMARCHE

REF: SECSTATE 140191

¶1. On August 2, PolOff delivered ref A demarche on the proposed Human Rights Council to MFA Supervising Director for Legal, Multilateral and Passports Department Nana Bema Kumi. Kumi reaffirmed the GOG's support for creating a Human Rights Council and said she saw "nothing controversial" in the U.S. government's position. She said the GOG had not formulated a precise position yet on the Council's scope, membership or size. Nor had the GOG had any substantive discussions on this issue with any other missions except "in the greater context of UN reforms."

¶2. With regard to the Council's scope, Kumi agreed with the U.S. government's position that the Council must be strong enough to confront serious human rights violations in specific countries. Without such power, the Council would not be a credible organization, she said. She also reaffirmed that the GOG does not support universal membership and does not want serious human rights violators permitted to serve on the Council. She added that the GOG would like to reduce the current number of seats, but she was uncertain whether the range of 20 to 35 seats would be acceptable to the GOG. She said she could not recall the formula underlying the geographical distribution of the current seats. She said the GOG would support reducing the Council's size if African countries maintained adequate geographical representation on the new body.

YATES